

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 9323

To establish a task force on child and family economic security and stability for economic growth.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 16, 2022

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ (for herself, Mr. EVANS, Ms. CHU, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois, and Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

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## A BILL

To establish a task force on child and family economic security and stability for economic growth.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Lifting American Chil-  
5       dren From Poverty Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

8           (1) According to the United States Census Bu-  
9       reau, poverty rates for children under the age of 18  
10       have increased to 16.1 percent in 2020, from 14.4

1 percent in 2019. The increase means that now  
2 11,600,000 children live in poverty, as opposed to  
3 10,000,000 in 2019.

4 (2) Data from the Children's Defense Fund  
5 show that child poverty is an issue that is con-  
6 centrated in the American south, with statistics  
7 showing that Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mis-  
8 sissippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina,  
9 Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia have over a  
10 quarter of their child population living in poverty.

11 (3) A 2018 Social Work Research report esti-  
12 mated that the annual economic costs of child pov-  
13 erty was \$36,000,000,000 to \$177,000,000,000,  
14 demonstrating how child poverty stalls economic pro-  
15 ductivity.

16 (4) Recent data from the Census Bureau Cur-  
17 rent Population Survey shows that child poverty in-  
18 creased sharply during the COVID–19 pandemic  
19 among Black and Latino families. More specifically,  
20 child poverty rose by 4.2 percent in Latino families  
21 and 2.8 percent in Black families.

22 (5) A report from the Urban Institute dem-  
23 onstrates that poverty is closely associated with a  
24 lack of educational achievement. For instance, only

1       64 percent of persistently poor children graduate  
2       from high school.

3                 (6) The problem of child poverty also acutely  
4       affects children of color, with 1 in 5 living in pov-  
5       erty. Another statistic from the Children's Defense  
6       Fund (2019) shows that 71 percent of children liv-  
7       ing in poverty were children of color. Children of  
8       color are also 2.5 times more likely to live in poverty  
9       than their White counterparts.

10               (7) The Census Bureau Current Population  
11       Survey also shows that COVID-19 erased recent  
12       gains in the United States toward combating child  
13       poverty. In September 2020, child poverty rates  
14       were at its lowest since 1973.

15               (8) 3.4 percent of families reported not having  
16       enough to eat prepandemic, but during the pandemic  
17       that number rose to 12 percent according to Center  
18       on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis. Among  
19       households with children, that number was 16 per-  
20       cent.

21               (9) Data published by the National Public  
22       Radio show that the child tax credit cut monthly  
23       child poverty rates by 30 percent and kept  
24       3,700,000 children out of poverty. In addition, 91  
25       percent of low-income families spent the tax credit

1       on basic needs, such as food. The monthly payments  
2       cut food insufficiency by 25 percent.

3 **SEC. 3. PURPOSE.**

4       The purpose of this Act is to establish an interagency  
5 task force that would create a strategic and comprehensive  
6 plan to reduce child poverty, particularly in States with  
7 higher poverty rates than the national average of 21 per-  
8 cent, by—

- 9                     (1) analyzing the state of child and intergenera-  
10          tional poverty and its causes;  
11                     (2) creating an inventory of all available Fed-  
12          eral programs aimed at reducing child poverty; and  
13                     (3) making recommendations for improving the  
14          effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs that  
15          reduce child poverty.

16 **SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON CHILD POVERTY.**

17             (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after  
18 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Labor, in co-  
19 operation with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-  
20 opment, and Secretary of Health and Human Services  
21 shall convene a permanent task force on child and family  
22 economic security and stability for economic growth (in  
23 this Act referred to as the “Task Force”).

1       (b) PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP.—The Task Force  
2 shall be composed of the following officials (or their des-  
3 ignees):

4                 (1) The Secretary of Labor, who shall serve as  
5 a co-chair of the Task Force.

6                 (2) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Devel-  
7 opment, who shall serve as a co-chair of the Task  
8 Force.

9                 (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-  
10 ices, who shall serve as a co-chair of the Task Force.

11                 (4) The Secretary of the Department of Agri-  
12 culture.

13                 (5) The Secretary of the Department of Com-  
14 mmerce.

15                 (6) The Secretary of Education.

16                 (7) The Secretary of the Treasury.

17                 (8) The Director of the Bureau of the Census.

18                 (9) Such other officials of Federal departments  
19 and agencies as the Secretary of Labor, the Sec-  
20 retary of Housing and Urban Development, and the  
21 Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting  
22 jointly, may designate or invite (as appropriate) to  
23 serve on the Task Force.

24       (c) ROTATIONAL MEMBERSHIP.—The Secretary of  
25 Labor and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Develop-

1 ment and the Secretary of Health and Human Services  
2 shall, jointly, nominate the following members to the task  
3 force for a period not to exceed 2 years:

4                 (1) Two experts on child poverty. The experts  
5                 nominated under this paragraph must have con-  
6                 ducted and published a significant body of research  
7                 on child poverty issues.

8                 (2) Two local government representatives from  
9                 States exhibiting child poverty rates of 22 percent or  
10                 more who have responsibilities in allocating, distrib-  
11                 uting or determining eligibility for means-tested ben-  
12                 efits.

13                 (3) Two representatives from nonprofit, com-  
14                 munity serving organizations working to address  
15                 child poverty through evidence-based and evidence-  
16                 informed approaches, which meet the scientifically  
17                 based methods definition of this Act.

18                 (4) Two representatives from State-level labor  
19                 or health and human services agencies in States with  
20                 above average child poverty rates.

21                 (5) Two representatives from the private sector  
22                 that have engaged in corporate social responsibility  
23                 efforts in low-income communities, and who have  
24                 measured success using metrics that are grounded  
25                 on scientifically based methods.

1                         (6) One representative with expertise in pro-  
2                         gram evaluation and evidence-based policymaking.

3                         (7) One representative with expertise in pro-  
4                         gram evaluation or implementation with Indian  
5                         Tribes.

6                         (d) TERM.—Except as noted in subsection (c), each  
7                         member shall be appointed for the life of the Task Force.

8                         (e) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Task Force shall  
9                         be filled in the manner in which the original appointment  
10                         was made.

11                         (f) PAY.—

12                         (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
13                         graph (2), members of the Task Force shall serve  
14                         without pay.

15                         (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall  
16                         receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of  
17                         subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions  
18                         under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United  
19                         States Code.

20                         (g) QUORUM.—A majority of members of the Task  
21                         Force shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may  
22                         hold hearings.

23 **SEC. 5. POWERS AND DUTIES.**

24                         (a) POWERS OF THE TASK FORCE.—

1                             (1) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Task  
2 Force may, for the purpose of carrying out this sec-  
3 tion, hold hearings, sit and act at times and places,  
4 take testimony, and receive evidence as the Task  
5 Force considers appropriate. The Task Force may  
6 administer oaths or affirmations to witnesses ap-  
7 pearing before it.

8                             (2) STAKEHOLDERS.—The Secretary of Labor,  
9 the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development,  
10 and the Secretary of Health and Human Services,  
11 acting jointly, shall, as appropriate, invite represen-  
12 tatives of stakeholders to attend meetings of the Task  
13 Force, appear before the Task Force, and file state-  
14 ments with the Task Force, subject to such require-  
15 ments as the Secretaries may determine.

16                             (3) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any  
17 member or agent of the Task Force may, if author-  
18 ized by the Task Force, take any action which the  
19 Task Force is authorized to take by this section.

20                             (4) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Task  
21 Force may secure directly from any department or  
22 agency of the United States information necessary  
23 to enable it to carry out this section. Upon request  
24 of the chairperson of the Task Force, the head of

1       that department or agency shall furnish that information to the Task Force.

3                 (5) MAILS.—The Task Force may use the  
4       United States mails in the same manner and under  
5       the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the United States.

7                 (6) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—  
8       Upon the request of the Task Force, the Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Task  
9       Force, on a reimbursable basis, the administrative  
10      support services necessary for the Task Force to  
11      carry out its responsibilities under this section.

13                 (b) DUTIES.—The Task Force shall submit to the  
14      President and Congress, a strategic plan to reduce child  
15      poverty, with emphasis and prioritization of those States  
16      experiencing higher than average poverty rates. Such plan  
17      shall require the Task Force to—

18                     (1) analyze the state of poverty in States experiencing higher than average child poverty to identify  
19                     common themes or patterns;

21                     (2) create an inventory of existing Federal programs targeting child poverty, and the different factors that lead to it including education, labor, child care and development, health, and housing;

1                         (3) identify duplicative programs, gaps in cov-  
2                         erage or programming, and programs that would  
3                         benefit from flexibility to blend and braid funding;

4                         (4) analyze evidence of the effectiveness of Fed-  
5                         eral programs in the inventory to promote contin-  
6                         uous improvement and to assure accountability;

7                         (5) provide recommendations, giving priority  
8                         preference for States exhibiting above average pov-  
9                         erty, on how to enhance, streamline, scale, improve,  
10                         expand effective programs or repurpose ineffective  
11                         programs, through legislative, executive and agency  
12                         actions, including—

13                         (A) new allocations in funding, for the ex-  
14                         pansion of effective programs;

15                         (B) pilot initiatives to improve the per-  
16                         formance of underperforming Federal programs  
17                         and initiatives, which shall be prioritized for  
18                         States experiencing above average child poverty;

19                         (C) considering tiered evidence grant mak-  
20                         ing to develop, implement, replicate, scale, and  
21                         evaluate evidence-based innovations;

22                         (D) considering flexibility and waiver pilots  
23                         to streamline programming;

24                         (E) considering Pay for Success initiatives,  
25                         when appropriate; and

(F) considering repurposing ineffective programs;

8                   (7) study the effect of the child tax credit under  
9                   section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 in  
10                  cutting child poverty and the effect of an expanded  
11                  and permanent child tax credit;

(10) the Task Force must consider the needs of Indian tribes;

20 (11) provide policy guidance and strategies on  
21 developing coordinated, coherent, and cohesive cross-  
22 agency implementation of actions and budgeting,  
23 with an emphasis on data and appropriate metrics;

24 (12) devise comprehensive action plans, includ-  
25 ing multivear and annual priorities;

1                         (13) create an accountability mechanism that  
2                         would allow Congress to monitor progress in States'  
3                         child poverty rates, and hold States accountable in  
4                         instances of minimal improvement, stagnant  
5                         progress or noncompliance; and

6                         (14) consider, and adopt mechanisms that are  
7                         documented, using scientifically based methods, to  
8                         effectively reduce child poverty, which may include—

9                             (A) tiered evidence grantmaking that allo-  
10                         cates funding based on the level of evidence  
11                         provided, with smaller awards made to test new  
12                         and innovative service models and larger awards  
13                         made to scale service models with stronger evi-  
14                         dence;

15                             (B) increased flexibility to braid and blend  
16                         funds by allowing for improved coordination,  
17                         comprehensive multigenerational programming  
18                         and streamlining of Federal funding; and

19                             (C) pay for success initiatives that tie pay-  
20                         ment for service delivery to the achievement of  
21                         measurable outcomes.

22                         (c) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—The Task Force  
23                         shall not consider or adopt strategies that would supplant  
24                         State or local funds.

## 1 SEC. 6. PROVISION OF STAFF, EXPERTS, AND CONSULT-

## 2 ANTS.

3 (a) DIRECTOR.—The Task Force shall have a director who shall be appointed by the co-chairs, acting jointly.

5 (b) STAFF APPOINTMENTS.—Subject to rules prescribed by the Task Force, the co-chairs, acting jointly, 6 may appoint additional personnel as the co-chairs consider 7 appropriate.

9 (c) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE  
10 LAWS.—The director and staff of the Task Force shall  
11 be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5, United  
12 States Code, governing appointments in the competitive  
13 service, and shall be paid in accordance with the provisions  
14 of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that  
15 title relating to classification and General Schedule pay  
16 rates.17 (d) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—Subject to rules  
18 prescribed by the Task Force, the co-chairs, acting jointly,  
19 may procure temporary and intermittent services under  
20 section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.21 (e) STAFF TO FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon request  
22 of the co-chairs, acting jointly, the head of any Federal  
23 department or agency may detail, on a reimbursable basis,  
24 any of the personnel of that department or agency to the  
25 Task Force to assist it in carrying out its duties under  
26 this section.

## 1 SEC. 7. INITIAL REPORT.

2 (a) FIRST REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than  
3 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Task  
4 Force shall provide to the Secretary of Labor and Con-  
5 gress a report that includes—

6 (1) a description of the state of poverty in  
7 States with child poverty rates of 22 percent or  
8 above, including—

9 (A) the workforce participation and em-  
10 ployment rates;

11 (B) the percentage of children living in  
12 poverty, including counties or school districts  
13 with persistent child poverty;

14 (C) an estimate of both the percentage and  
15 number of individuals who are self employed;

16 (D) the average reading and mathematics  
17 proficiency for elementary school, from third  
18 grade and thereafter, and secondary school stu-  
19 dents;

20 (E) rates of secondary and post-secondary  
21 completion for those experiencing poverty;

22 (F) the number and percentage of individ-  
23 uals participating in means-tested benefits pro-  
24 grams;

25 (G) an inventory and analysis of all Fed-  
26 eral programs and their evidence base aimed at

1           reducing child poverty or any of its casual vari-  
2           ables;

3           (H) a summary of existing studies that  
4           have used scientifically based research methods  
5           to evaluate the effectiveness of Federal pro-  
6           grams and recommendations for ensuring the  
7           studies are made publicly available online in a  
8           user-friendly format; and

9           (I) a plan for legislative, executive, or  
10          other actions, to reduce child poverty rates,  
11          with a specific focus on jurisdictions with above  
12          average child poverty rates, and address any  
13          issues identified as a result of the initial report  
14          through—

15               (i) increasing enrollment or expansion  
16          of Federal programs that have shown to be  
17          effective in States with higher than aver-  
18          age child poverty rates;

19               (ii) building scholarly literature and  
20          evidence, including tiered-evidence ap-  
21          proaches, to generate Federal strategies  
22          and new funding opportunities for States  
23          with higher than average child poverty  
24          rates;

20 (3) a plan for the creation of an accountability  
21 mechanism to ensure that child poverty rates are  
22 monitored and States held accountable for progress.

(b) SUBSEQUENT REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and biennially thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the President

1 and the Congress, make publicly available, and disseminate a report detailing—

3 (1) the strategies developed to address deficiencies noted by the report under subsection (a);

5 (2) in the case of reports subsequent to the first report of this subsection, a description of the accomplishments of the task force since the preceding report;

9 (3) national priorities for addressing child poverty, economic growth, and family stability in the United States;

12 (4) updates on Federal research findings and research needs regarding child and family economic security and stability for economic growth;

15 (5) information submitted to the Task Force by Federal departments and agencies for inclusion in the report;

18 (6) information submitted by stakeholders for inclusion in the report; and

20 (7) progress on strategies in the previous report in States with above average child poverty rates in the original report, which will include—

23 (A) updated child poverty rates, including the nominal and percentage value changes from the original report;

## **10 SEC. 8. REQUIRED RECORDS AND PUBLIC NOTICES.**

11 (a) MEETINGS.—

20 (3) NOTICE.—The Task Force shall—

24 (B) provide for other types of public notice  
25 to ensure that all interested persons receive

1           timely notice of each upcoming meeting of the  
2           Task Force.

3           (4) MINUTES.—

4               (A) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall  
5           record and maintain detailed minutes of each  
6           meeting of the Task Force, including—

- 7                       (i) the meeting agenda;  
8                       (ii) a record of the persons present;  
9                       (iii) a complete and accurate descrip-  
10                  tion of matters discussed at the meeting  
11                  and conclusions reached; and  
12                       (iv) copies of all reports received,  
13                  issued, or approved by the Task Force in  
14                  connection with the meeting.

15               (B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY; COPYING.—The  
16           Task Force shall make such minutes available  
17           for public inspection and copying.

18               (C) ACCURACY.—The co-chairs of the Task  
19           Force shall certify the accuracy of all such min-  
20           utes.

21           **SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

22           There are authorized to be appropriated such sums  
23           as may be necessary to carry out this Act, and any  
24           amounts so appropriated shall remain available until ex-  
25           pended.

1   **SEC. 10. TERMINATION OF TASK FORCE.**

2       The Task Force shall terminate no later than 4 years  
3       after enactment of this Act.

4   **SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.**

5       In this Act:

6           (1) CHILD LIVING IN POVERTY.—The term  
7       “child living in poverty” means an individual—

8                  (A) who is under the age of 18;  
9                  (B) who lives in a State where the average  
10         poverty rate is higher than the national average  
11         of 21 percent; and

12                  (C) whose family has an income at or  
13         below the poverty line.

14           (2) ESEA TERMS.—The terms “elementary  
15         school”, “poverty line”, “secondary school”, and “in-  
16         stitution of higher education” have the meanings  
17         given the terms in section 8101 of the Elementary  
18         and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.  
19         7801).

20           (3) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe”  
21         has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the  
22         Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance  
23         Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

24           (4) MEANS-TESTED FEDERAL BENEFIT PRO-  
25         GRAM.—The term “means-tested Federal benefit  
26         program” means a mandatory spending program of

1       the Federal Government, in which eligibility for the  
2       program's benefits, or the amount of such benefits,  
3       are determined on the basis of income or resources  
4       of the individual or family seeking the benefit, and  
5       includes—

6                 (A) the supplemental security income pro-  
7                 gram under title XVI of the Social Security Act  
8                 (42 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.);

9                 (B) the supplemental nutrition assistance  
10                 program under the Food and Nutrition Act of  
11                 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);

12                 (C) the free and reduced price school lunch  
13                 program established under the Richard B. Rus-  
14                 sell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.  
15                 1751 et seq.) and the summer food service pro-  
16                 gram for children under section 13 of such Act  
17                 (20 U.S.C. 1761);

18                 (D) the program of block grants for States  
19                 for temporary assistance for needy families es-  
20                 tablished under part A of title IV of the Social  
21                 Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);

22                 (E) the special supplemental nutrition pro-  
23                 gram for women, infants, and children estab-  
24                 lished by section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act  
25                 of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786);

(F) the Medicaid program;

(H) the refundable portion of the child tax credit allowed under section 24(d) of such Code; and

(I) payments received under section 8 of  
the United States Housing Act of 1937.

13 (A) research that applies rigorous, systematic,  
14 and objective procedures to obtain valid  
15 knowledge relevant to child poverty; and

16 (B) includes research that—

17 (i) employs systemic, empirical meth-  
18 ods that draw on observation or experi-  
19 ment;

20 (ii) involves rigorous data analyses  
21 that are adequate to test the stated  
22 hypotheses and justify the general conclu-  
23 sions drawn;

24 (iii) relies on measurements or obser-  
25 vational methods that provide valid data

1                   across evaluators and observers and across  
2                   multiple measurements and observations;  
3                   and

4                   (iv) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed  
5                   journal or approved by a panel of  
6                   independent experts through a comparably  
7                   rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

8                 (6) TIERED-EVIDENCE APPROACHES.—The  
9                   term “tiered-evidence approaches” include research  
10                  or activities, including grant classification, where  
11                  such research, activities or grants are awarded to  
12                  programs according to their level of evidence of ef-  
13                  fectiveness.

14                (7) STATE.—The term “State” means the sev-  
15                  eral States, the District of Columbia, the Common-  
16                  wealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Com-  
17                  monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam,  
18                  and the United States Virgin Islands.

19                (8) REPURPOSE.—The term “repurpose” means  
20                  shifting funding from low-performing or low-use pro-  
21                  grams, policies, or practices to high impact pro-  
22                  grams, policies, or practices.

